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*Reports from Seattle, Wash.—Status of plague-prevention work—
Statement of laboratory work done since January 22, 1908.*

Passed Assistant Surgeon Glover reports, March 9:

The following is a review of the general situation at this port: January 22, the work hitherto done by the Service, with the exceptions of the bacteriological examination of rats and the fumigation of ships, was taken over by the health authorities of the city of Seattle. The local health authorities have conducted the work of poisoning and trapping rats in various sections of the city for the purpose of locating if possible any infected rats. The general work of cleaning up the city has also been done by the local health authorities.

At this season of the year the shipping traffic is at its lowest ebb and quite a number of vessels are now laid up that within a month or so will be put into commission.

Five rats infected with plague were found during the months of November, December, and January. These rats were for the most part found near the water front in tide-flat land. This region was thoroughly covered by poisoners and trappers, but no plague rats have been found there since January.

Considerable regrading is in progress in Seattle. Hills are being cut down and the dirt deposited on tide flats, raising the flats from 20 to 40 feet. Houses are elevated on piles to a similar height in these low-lying parts of the city, and all this, combined with the work of cleaning up refuse, destroying old shacks, and poisoning and trapping, has scattered the rats over the city. Householders in sections hitherto comparatively free from rodents are now reporting the presence of large numbers of rats in their neighborhoods. This season of the year is characterized by greatly increased rainfall in this region, and the rats, of necessity, take refuge in buildings. The number of fleas on rats is less than in November. Counts made in the laboratory show that the number of fleas per rat has dropped from 15-20 per rat in November to 6 fleas in 14 rats in February. Fleas become more plentiful here in March.

Assistant Surgeon Chapin reports, March 4, through Passed Assistant Surgeon Glover:

The following is a report of the work done in the plague laboratory since January 22, 1908:

During this period 5,931 rats were examined post-mortem. Where the gross inspection offered any ground of suspicion of infection with bacillus pestis, microscopical examination was made of smears from the bubo, liver, and spleen. Where the gross appearances were suggestive of plague, or where plague-like bacilli were found in the smears, cultures were taken, and in 14 of the most suspicious cases guinea pigs were given cutaneous inoculation with material from the organs. Cultures have uniformly proven negative as to bacillus pestis. None of the inoculated guinea pigs have shown signs of illness. In no case has a rat brought to the laboratory shown the typical lesions of advanced plague with large numbers of bacilli in the organs. The cultural and inoculation work has therefore been confined to rats showing a typical lesion or suspected of having the disease in an incipient state.